1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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CLOTHING

291 MEN.—The loin cloth, breechcloth, or waistcloth (M.: *palpura;*[37] T., P.: *wah;* U.: *ani*) was formerly the only article of dress worn by men on ordinary occasions. It consists of a long, narrow strip of bark cloth, 8 to 9 feet long and 12 to 15 inches wide, which is wrapped several times around the loins, while the ends are left to hang down in front and behind. Occasionally it was made from cotton, and ornamented with colored patterns. The loin cloth has now practically disappeared among the Miskito, being worn only by boys, but it is still in use among the grown-up Sumu. Now all the men from [177] both tribes own loose cotton shirts (M.: *prak;* S.: *parak;* from the English "frock") and trousers (M.: *trâusis,* from the English; T., P.: *kal-anin;* U.: *kalson,* from the Spanish "calzón") with the tails generally not tucked in. They make these articles themselves [434] from imported cloth or they obtain the finished garment by way of trade. Formerly the Sumu used a sort of shirt or poncho, consisting [287] merely of a sheet of tree bark with a hole in the middle for the head; it was tied under each arm with a piece of fiber. This primitive garment was called *kahlâu* or *kahlo* by the Sumu; its Miskito name is unknown. When the Indian is in the open at the approach of rain he pulls his shirt off and covers it up with large *Heliconia* or *Musa* leaves in order to prevent it from getting wet.

WOMEN.—The only garment worn by the more primitive women of both tribes is a wrapper (M.: *kwaluntara;* T.: *ipnapan;* P.: *ipnapani, asna-pani, amat-pani;* U.: *asna-pahka*), a piece of cloth, 2½ to 3 yards in length, which is wrapped about the hips and extends from the waist, where it is fastened by tucking in one end, down to the knees. Now- [439] adays it is made of imported bright-colored cloth, but formerly the [287] common tunu bark cloth was used for this purpose. The upper part of the body was entirely naked in former days, but now the women wear a sleeveless garment of imported cotton goods, which is cut very open and is known by the English name *prak* (= "frock") among the Miskito; the Sumu call it *kahlâu* (T., P.) or *kahlo* (U.). Little girls wear a sort of loin cloth, as do the boys, but with broad end pieces which look like small aprons in front and behind; this garment is called *nika* by the Miskito and *tatai* by the Sumu.

292 DRESS OF THE CHIEFS.—Men of rank wore, besides the loin cloth, a sleeveless cotton tunic (M.: *wipal;*[38] S.: *kiñkura*) which hung down to the knees; it was beautifully embroidered with the down of the [531] muscovy duck and dyed by means of vegetable juices. A girdle, sash or belt (M.: *yalasawa;* S.: *bamak-sitna*) of the same material was tied around the waist over this sort of mantle; it was about 6 feet long and 6 inches wide.

[37] This name is mentioned in 1699 under the form *purproy* (M. W.: 307, 308).
[38] Compare the word "huipil" in Mexican-Spanish.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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short distance from a small creek. A picture of one of these sites is given by Spinden (536). Occasionally these antiquales are surrounded by low walls, perhaps remains of former fortifications; others again were apparently defended by ditches and perhaps by palisades also. 324 172

ANCIENT METATES.—The metates found in these deposits are supported by three long, well-centered legs, which are generally covered with geometric designs; in front there is a bird or animal head (eagle, turtle, alligator, or jaguar). The Indians occasionally dig them up to be used in their households. Some fine specimens have been broken by man or by falling trees. Giant metates, which may reach over 6 feet in length, are still found, but the sculptured head has generally been removed from them. They remind us of the wooden stools still found in the Indian dwellings and it is very likely that they were used as ceremonial seats. In the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, there is a metate from the Mosquito Coast (Hodge: 56). Several large specimens from an important site discovered near Cucra Hill (to the south of Pearl Lagoon) about 30 years ago upon clearing the land for making banana plantations are in the American Museum of Natural History. The Peabody Museum of Harvard University also owns a few metates from the vicinity of Bluefields. [531]

ANCIENT BOWLS.—Cylindrical bowls with three short legs and made from a very hard granitelike rock are also found in the above-mentioned old sites, but they are less common than the metates. Two knobs near the rim, carved into bird or animal heads, serve as handles. These bowls or vases are ornamented with geometric motives, of which the most common is the incised guilloche, or rope pattern, of either curvilinear or angular construction.

The first description, accompanied with illustrations, of these "granite vases" from the Mosquito Coast is given by Pownall (318–324, pl. XXVI), who figures three of these objects. Two of these belonged to Lord Hillsborough. One of these latter (No. 1) is very small and has an animal head on one side. The larger one (No. 2) is more interesting; it is about 12 to 15 inches in diameter and 10 inches in height, with plain legs. There are two rows of diamond-shaped ornaments on the body of the vessel; the two handles take the form of a head and a tail, but the head is partly broken off. The third vessel (No. 3) is about 10 to 12 inches in diameter and height, but at the top it is somewhat narrower; it has carved legs and two head ornaments and is perhaps the best specimen in good condition found in the country. The bowls No. 2 and No. 3 have been reproduced by Humboldt (I, p. 238, and II, pl. 30) and by Dupaix (I, div. II, 27–28, and II, suppl. pl. VII, No. 1). The illustration of No. 3 has been copied also by Bancroft (IV, 36).

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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the neighborhood of the hut, where it is left to burn slowly, until all the wood and coals have been consumed. Neither paint, glaze, nor plastic ornamentation is applied nowadays.

ANCIENT POTTERY VESSELS.—The pottery objects found in many parts of the Mosquito Coast, chiefly in old burial grounds, indicate a much greater skill in this art than that possessed by the present-day inhabitants of the country. Most of such ware is unpainted, but fine plastic ornamentation was applied to the knob handles and occasionally to the legs also. The designs represent chiefly heads of jaguars, alligators, turtles, and birds. Fragments of tripod vessels with legs modified into animal legs may also be found; sometimes these legs are hollow and contain clay balls as rattlers. In the shell mounds or kitchen middens near the sea fragments of pottery vessels with figurine handles have been discovered. A geometric motive, which is often found on old pottery vessels and on stonework, is the incised guilloche or rope pattern, which may have a curvilinear or an angular construction.

ANCIENT CLAY MASKS.—From the interior of the Mosquito Coast, probably the Sumu territory, the discovery of human heads, busts or entire figures, made of clay, has been reported. The material used for this purpose is said to have been mixed occasionally with gold dust. These objects are supposed to be the likenesses of chiefs or other prominent persons who had been buried at the spots where these finds were made. A number of these "masks" were brought to England from the interior of the Mosquito Coast about the year 1775, and eight of them have been described and depicted by Rogers (107). As these masks have their backs concaved in a cylindrical form, they were probably parts of sepulchral urns.

COTTON TEXTILES

CULTIVATION OF COTTON.—The art of weaving has not been mastered by the young generation, but cotton (*Gossypium* sp.; M.: *wahmuk;* S.: *wahmak*) is still cultivated in a desultory way. The bushes, which attain a height of from 8 to 12 feet, may be found in the neighborhood of almost every hut; they flower the whole year round, and at any time buds and open bolls may be found on the same plant.

A FEMALE OCCUPATION.—Dyeing and spinning cotton and weaving it into cloth is exclusively woman's work. Exquemelin (Fr. edit.: II, 269), who wrote during the second half of the seventeenth century, states that the women only spin the cotton and that the men do the weaving.

TYPES OF FABRICS.—The elder Sumu women still weave cotton into loin cloths (M.: *palpura;* T. and P.: *dôh;* U.: *asi*), girdles or

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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it with sulphur. They apply a thin coat of the milk on cloth for the making of waterproof traveling bags, hunter's bags, and ponchos or raincoats. This industry is, however, chiefly in the hands of the Ladinos.

WOOD CARVING.—Wooden stools (M.: *sulati;* T., P.: *sini;* U.: *panba*), carved with the machete and the adze from a solid block of wood, are in universal use. In olden times these stools had three well-centered, elaborately decorated legs and a beautiful bird or animal head, reminding much of the metates which are occasionally found in the ancient sites.

Formerly a sort of walking stick or scepter of hard wood, surmounted by a carved human head, was an insignium of office and authority, but this custom has been introduced apparently by the English or Spanish, as there is no native name for it. Similar sticks now belong to the outfit of the Miskito sukya.

The central house post of the old-fashioned Sumu hut was also elaborately carved. The art was also practiced on various wooden domestic implements, as for instance the large wooden spoons (M.: *kustara;* T., P.: *pan-yamna;* U.: *kusaro*) and the cradles (M.: *kuhsañ;* T., P.: *pala;* U.: *lim*). Wood carvings generally represent animal or human heads, or geometric figures, rarely floral designs. At the festivals of the dead celebrated by the Miskito headdresses carved into animal or human heads are sometimes worn.

ENGRAVED CALABASHES.—The common calabashes (M.: *kahmi, kami;* S.: *sutak*) of the Miskito and Sumu are often engraved with simple geometric designs, such as triangles, circles, zigzag lines, parallelograms, which recall those used in tattooing, on pottery vessels and painted tunu cloth, or the ones found on the large river bowlders. According to the Indians, however, these are merely impromptu inventions and serve no other purpose but that of identifying their calabashes. An elaborately carved and painted calabash, obtained from a Sumu chief of Rio Bocay, has been described and depicted by Sapper (f, 206–210).

BEADWORK.—The women of both tribes are very clever in making pretty bead ornaments of various colors to be worn around neck, wrist, below the knee, and above the ankle; the men also occasionally use them as watch fobs and as hatbands. The designs are chiefly animal, especially of snakes. Two patterns of beadwork have been pictured by Sapper (a, 274), one representing paddle handles, the other the skin of the *ribeya* salamander. The Indians utilize small glass beads (M.: *lilyara;* T., P.: *ala;* U.: *tasaika*), which they obtain from the foreign traders. The colors preferred are green, blue, black, and white, while red, brown, and yellow are only sparingly used. Fellechner (137), however, states that the blue beads are not liked by the Miskito and that the red and yellow ones are preferred by

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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531 [439] them. White thread and small needles (M.: *silak;* T., P.: *silip;* U.: *akusa*, from Spanish "aguja") of foreign manufacture are employed to string the beads.

NAVIGATION AND CANOE MAKING

484 Travel is effected chiefly by canoe, for there are hardly any roads in the country outside of the hunting trails; the numerous navigable rivers intersecting the country form, together with the lagoons and the sea, the means of communication.

The Miskito inhabiting the immediate seashore from Cabo Gracias a Dios on southward are excellent seamen; they were already noted for their courage on the sea by the buccaneers (Raveneau de Lussan: 440). The Miskito living to the north of that settlement, however, navigate the lagoons and rivers, and rarely venture on the sea. The Indians living inland, on the other hand, are afraid of the sea and of the large lagoons, but they are perfectly at home in the bush, and they are very expert in navigating the river boats through the dangerous falls and rapids.

491 BRIDGES.—The liana bridges, which are met with in other parts of Central America, are unknown on the Mosquito Coast. The Miskito and Sumu occasionally make a crude bridge over a narrow creek by felling a tree across it. Canoes are used everywhere for the crossing of the streams.

501 TYPES OF CANOES.—Two sorts of dugout canoes are used on the Mosquito Coast. The "dori," or keeled canoe, is used to navigate the sea and lagoons, while the "pitpan," or flat-bottomed canoe, is employed on the rivers. The sea canoes are fast sailors, but somewhat "cranky." All these boats are hollowed out by means of the adze; the largest specimens, cut out of the solid tree, without any addition, may reach up to 5 feet beam and 40 feet in length.

PITPAN.—The "pitpan" is a long narrow boat with flat bottom, drawing but little water; it is therefore particularly fitted to navigate the shallow creeks of the interior which abound in rapids and falls. It glides noiselessly over the water and is easily steered, but it is very cranky and the slightest motion renders it liable to upset. It is therefore of no use on the sea. The pitpan has a square projecting bow and stern, like a small platform, large enough for a person to stand on. A hole is made in the bow through which a pole is thrust perpendicularly in the ground, to moor at river banks or at shoals. The pitpan is very thick bottomed, and for that reason may sustain very rough handling in hauling it over the rocks at rapids and falls.

The name "pitpan," which is in general use among the English-speaking population of eastern Central America, is taken from the Miskito word *pitban*, which means plaited. It is claimed by some

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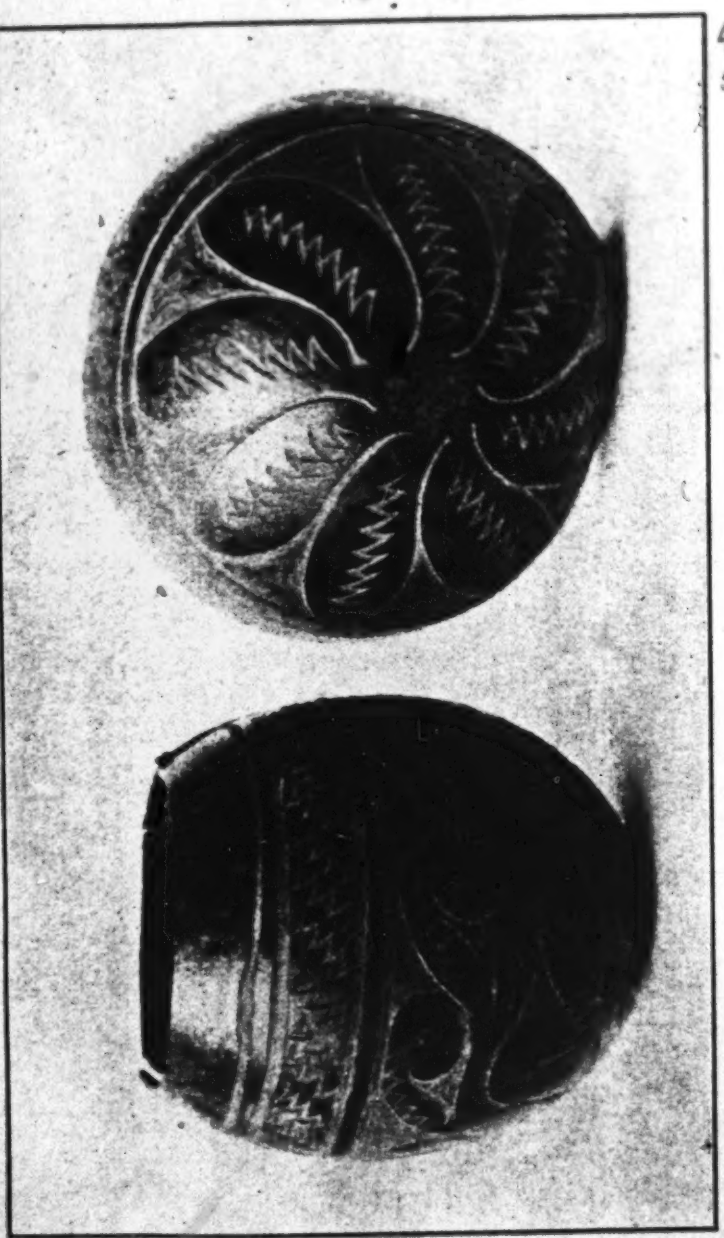

DECORATED CALABASH VESSELS
Bottoms of upper Rio Grande.

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[p. 54 A]

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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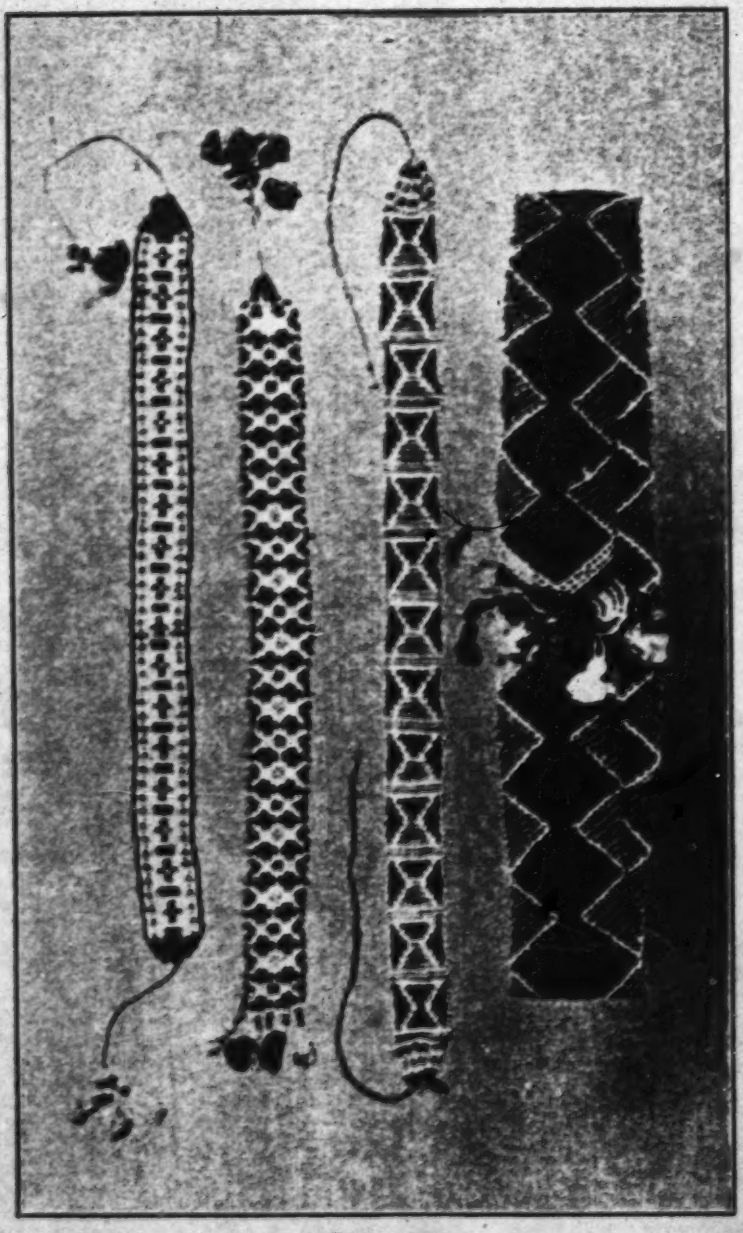

BEADWORK
Miskito and Sumu of Rio Coco.

[p. 54 B]

1: Conzemius M-4,5 (1921) 1932
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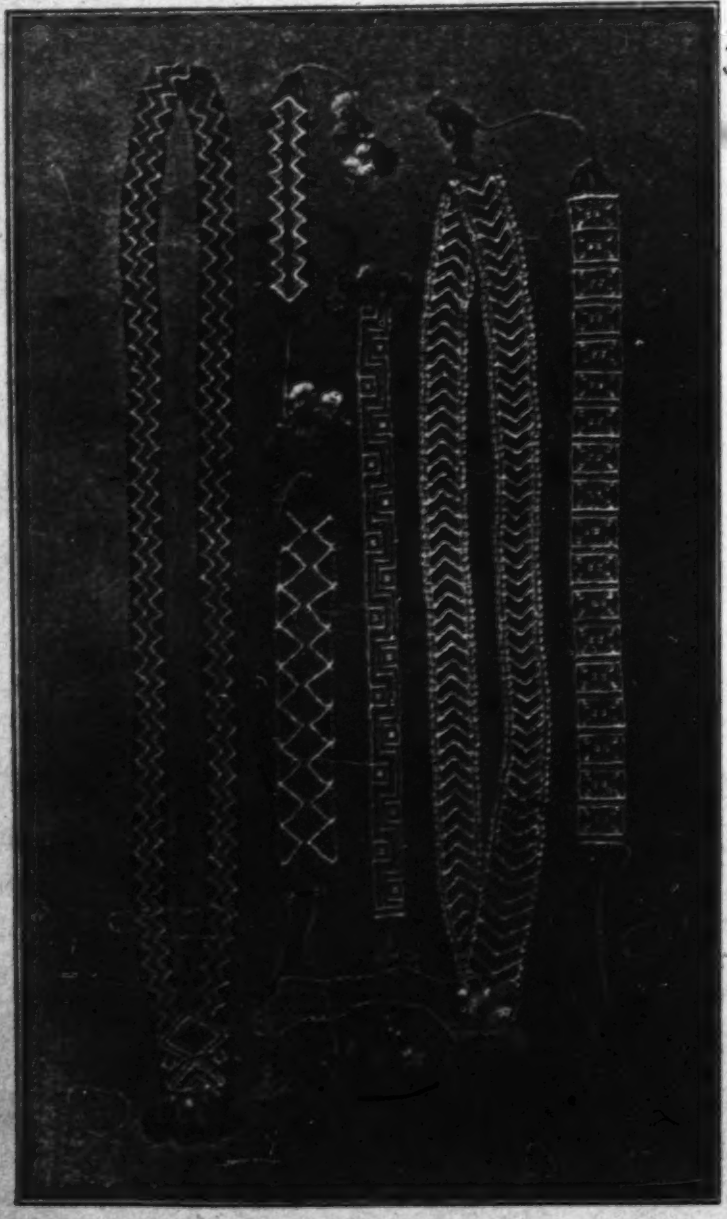

BEADWORK
Miskito and Sumu of Rio Coco.

[p. 54 c]

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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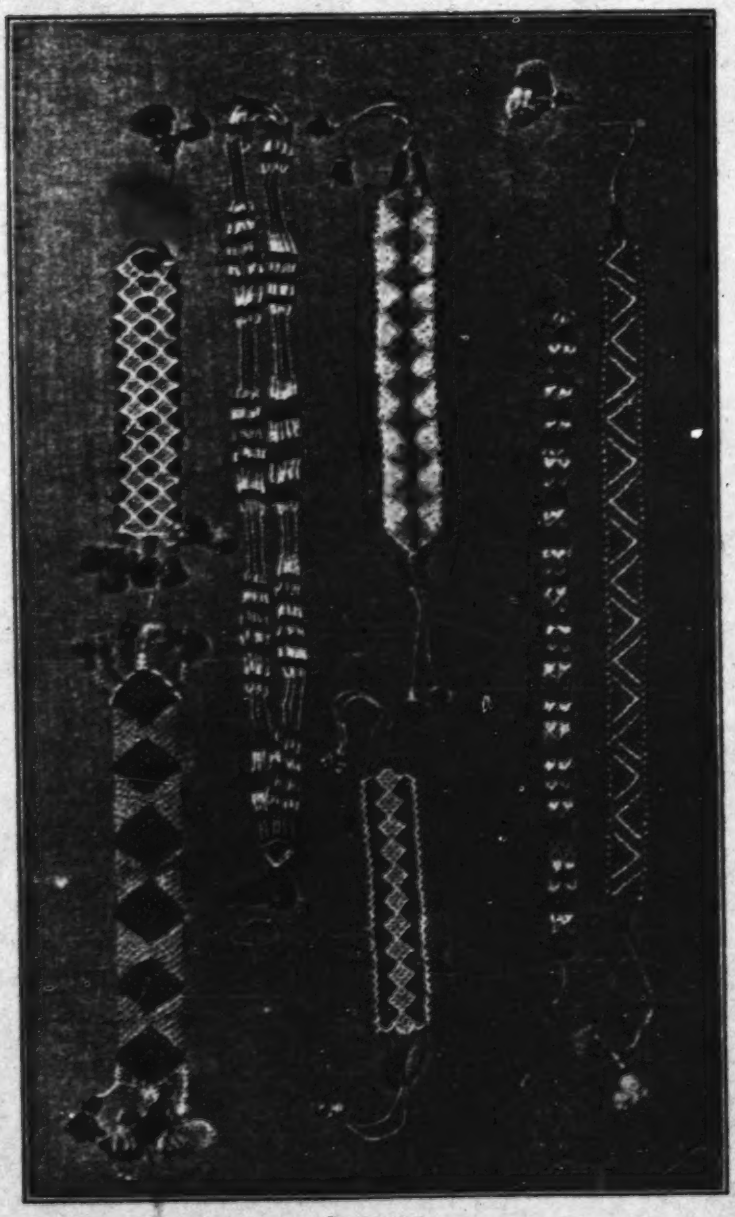

BEADWORK
Miskito and Sumu of Rio Coco

[p. 54 D]

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
SA15 Mosquito SA15

wore tight cotton bands below the knees and above the ankles. Today 301
woven bands of glass beads are worn around the neck, wrists, and ankles. Straw hats are decorated with feathers and jaguar teeth (*Mosquito, Paya*).

Black paint is smeared over the body by the men (*Sumo, Mosquito,* 302
Paya) as a decoration and for protection from insects. Geometrical de- [751]
signs are drawn in red paint, mainly by the women. The *Sumo, Mosquito,* [53]
and *Paya* tattooed geometrical designs upon the face, arms, and breast. 304
The *Sumo* men made ornamental scars on their faces and chipped their teeth. All *Sumo* tribes except the *Bawihka* practiced head deformation. During infancy a folding flap of wood at the top of the cradle was tied firmly to the crown of the head.

TRANSPORTATION

Loads are carried with a band passing over the head (women) or 482
across the chest (men). Children are carried on the back in a blanket, [855]
the points of which are tied in front. [867]

The country has hunting trails but no roads. Most travel is done 501
in dugout canoes propelled with poles and broad-bladed paddles. Rafts are used for down-river traffic. Large keeled canoes, often equipped with a sail, are used at sea.

MANUFACTURES

Basketry.—Crude baskets, mainly of wickerwork, are made chiefly for 285
storage bins. Bark and silk grass fiber bags are very common. Bark fiber is used also to make tumplines, hammocks, and such.

Bark cloth.—Bark cloth is beaten out of ficus-tree bark with a grooved 287
wooden mallet.

Weaving.—Cotton is spun on a spindle, which has a whorl and is 286
rotated in a gourd. Coarse-textured but soft cotton cloth is woven on a two-beam loom. Thread was formerly dyed and designs were woven in the cloth. Sometimes feathers, particularly a fringe of white Muscovy duck down, were incorporated into the fabric.

Ceramics.—Pottery making has been described only from the *Sumo* 323
and *Paya*, although pottery was formerly made by all tribes. Women model small vessels out of a lump of clay but build up large ones with coils. They polish them with a pebble, dry them for several days, and fire them in the open. Pottery types include jars about 4 feet (1.3 m.) high, various types of jugs, water jars, small bowls, griddles, and tobacco pipes. All vessels have a convex base.

Miscellaneous manufactures.—Metates are still used by the *Paya* 415
and *Sumo*, and they have recently been adopted by the *Jicaque*, but the *Mosquito* are said no longer to use them. Metates are flat-topped boulders, which only rarely have a trimmed surface. Manos are round pebbles.

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
SA15 Mosquito SA15

415 Both the *Paya* and the *Northern Sumo* occasionally use elaborately carved metates and well-made manos obtained at ancient ruins. The *Mosquito* made large wooden mortars and single-ended or, more rarely, double-ended pestles.

412 Tools used for working wood and for fashioning many miscellaneous articles were: Scrapers made of fish teeth, turtle shells, or stone and knives made of split bamboo. Three-legged wooden stools were formerly richly carved, often having a bird or animal head. Spoons, ladles, cradles, and the like are also made of wood. Gourds are often engraved with simple geometrical designs (pl. 36, *bottom*).

411 **Weapons.**—*Mosquito*, *Sumo*, and *Jicaque* bows are 4 to 5 feet (1.3 to 1.6 m.) long, *Paya* specimens 6 feet (2 m.) long. They taper toward the ends and are rectangular in cross section. Killing arrows have a cane shaft and palm-wood foreshaft. Points of flint, obsidian, turtle shell, fishbone, and shark and alligator teeth were being replaced by iron ones as early as 1678 (Exquemelin, 1678). Arrows are not feathered. According to Exquemelin, the arrows used about the Laguna de Bluefields (*Kukra*) were 6 to 8 feet (2 to 2.6 m.) long with a flint tip and a wooden hook (possibly some type of barb?). Some arrows were weighted with pebbles. Stunning arrows have blunt knobs made of hard wood or beeswax.

The *Ulva* and *Paya* make blowguns, possibly only toys, from a reed 18 inches (45 cm.) long. These shoot wax pellets. The blowgun is, even among Hispanicized *Jicaque*, an effective weapon. It is bored from a branch of a certain tree, and clay pellets are carefully made by means of a gage (Von Hagen, 1943, pp. 50–52). The *Mosquito* and *Sumo* probably used the blowgun, but present information is not precise.

Arrow poison has been reported from some *Mosquito* tribes. Bancroft says that this was made from the juice of *Hippomane mancinella*. Conzemius did not observe this tree in the territory but mentions the possibility that the secretions from a frog (*Dendrobates tinctorius*) may have been used. The former poison is used by the *Carib*, and both types are used by the *Cuna* and *Choco*.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

422 Little is known of the aboriginal organization of these tribes. Both chiefs and shamans had great power. Local governments now control the villages, but during the Conquest these tribes were organized for war in various ways. Chiefs were elected by the elderly men and their power was supreme. The office was not hereditary, but among the *Mosquito* a nephew or son-in-law of a chief might succeed him. The whole *Mosquito* tribe, under British guidance, was united and ruled by a "king" who carried as insignia a staff and a gold or silver breastplate.

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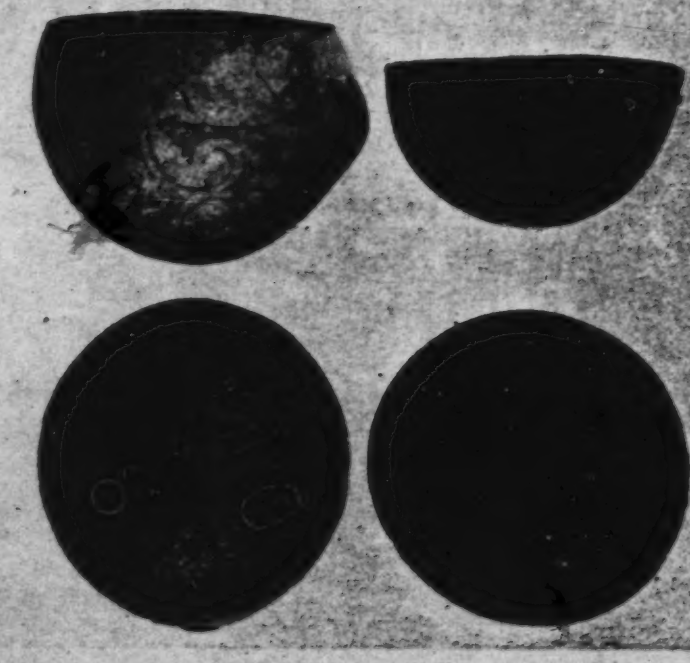

PLATE 36.—Sumo manufactures. *Top:* Beadwork. *Bottom:* Decorated gourd bowls. (Courtesy American Museum of Natural History.)

[p. 228 - B]